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21 June 1999

Jane Henney, M.D.
Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration (HF-1)
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Henney:

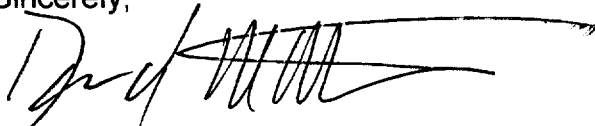
I am writing to express my concern about the use of antibiotics by livestock producers and to urge the FDA to ban the use of medically important antibiotics to promote animal growth, as recommended by the World Health Organization.

Diseases long controlled by antibiotics are becoming more difficult to treat as illnesses once easily curable fail to respond to previously effective drugs. The ineffectiveness of antibiotics due to overuse by physicians, hospitals and livestock producers threatens to precipitate a public health crisis. The Union of Concerned Scientists reports evidence that drugs given to animals play a role in antibiotic resistance to human diseases. About a third of the antibiotics manufactured in the United States each year are added to animal feed to fatten animals cheaply, even though there are other ways to produce safe meat at reasonable prices.

I join the signatories of the Center for Science in Public Interest in urging the FDA to withdraw approvals for the use of medically important antibiotics to promote growth in animals. Withdrawal of the drugs for growth promotion would still allow their use in sick animals, so this is not a question of allowing animals to suffer to preserve the health of humans. I respectfully request the FDA to stand in favor of caring for children over promoting cheap chicken.

I thank you for your time and consideration in this very important matter.

Sincerely,



David M. Matthews

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